



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## Background Information Sheet

### Tampere Convention: Core Provisions and Benefits

The Tampere Convention is a treaty aimed at facilitating the use of telecommunication resources and assistance for disaster mitigation and relief. It establishes an international framework for states to cooperate among themselves and with non-state entities and intergovernmental organizations

The Tampere Convention is based on the following core provisions:

#### **Reducing regulatory barriers**

State Parties agree to “reduce or remove regulatory barriers to the use of telecommunication resources for disaster mitigation and relief” including, but not limited to: import or export restrictions, restrictions on the movement of essential personnel, restrictions on use of particular types of equipment or radio-frequency spectrums, and licensing requirements and fees. They further agree to reduce regulatory barriers for transit through their territory of personnel, equipment, materials and information for relief operations in other States. (Article 9)

#### **Ensuring necessary privileges, immunities and facilities**

State Parties agree, to the extent permitted by national law, to grant relief personnel and organizations providing telecommunication assistance with their express approval

the necessary privileges, immunities and facilities for the performance of their functions. These include immunity from arrest, detention and legal process; immunity from seizure, attachment or requisition in relation to their equipment, materials and property; exemption from taxes, duties and other charges, excluding value-added tax (VAT); provision of local facilities; exemption or facilitation of license procedures; and protection of personnel, equipment and materials. (Article 5)



#### **Respect for state sovereignty**

Recipient States retain full control over the initiation and termination of telecommunications assistance, with the power to reject all or part of any offer of assistance (Articles 4(5) and 6(1)). Recipient States also retain the right to direct, control, coordinate and supervise telecommunication assistance provided under the Convention within their territory (Article

4 (8)). The Convention also establishes that all organizations providing telecommunication assistance or otherwise facilitating the use of telecommunication resources have the duty to respect the laws and regulations of that State Party and not to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Requesting State (Article 5 (7)).

### **Improving coordination and information sharing**

**Assignment of the operational coordinator:** The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)) is appointed the “operational coordinator” for the Convention with a number of tasks aimed at improving coordination and information sharing with regard to telecommunications assistance. (Article 2)

**Managing requests and offers:** Requests for telecommunications assistance may be made directly or through the intermediary of the Operational Coordinator. They are to be as specific as possible. Other State Parties are to respond quickly as to the assistance it is able to provide and its terms. (Article 4)

**Sharing information on hazards:** State Parties agree to share information about hazards and disasters among themselves, non-State entities and intergovernmental organizations and the public, particularly at-risk communities. (Article 3)

**Establishment of a telecommunication assistance information inventory:** States are to keep the operational coordinator informed as to which national

authorities are responsible for matters arising under the Tampere Convention and competent to identify telecommunication resources which could be made available for disaster mitigation and relief. The operational coordinator is asked to maintain lists of these authorities and disseminate them to States, non-State entities and intergovernmental organizations. (Article 8)

Otherwise, the Tampere Convention creates a more orderly system for requesting, accepting and terminating international assistance and encourages improved systems for cooperation among States.

In addition to lowering administrative barriers to international telecommunications relief, the Convention clarifies important operational questions on privileges and immunities, costs and liability.

The Convention is of particular significance to humanitarian actors, inasmuch as:

- Non-state actors may benefit from the lowering of administrative barriers as well as States.
- The Convention extends privileges and immunities beyond States and international organizations to non-State actors providing telecommunications assistance.

The Convention recognizes the unique identity of the Red Cross/Red Crescent within the humanitarian community (Article 1(11)).

## Links

- [Text of the Tampere Convention](#)
- [The Tampere Convention official web page](#)
- [The Second Tampere Conference on Disaster Communications \(CDC-2001\)](#)
- [Intergovernmental Conference on Emergency Telecommunications \(ICET-98\)](#)
- [ITU Plenipotentiary Conference \(PP-98\) – Resolution 36](#)
- [The Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications \(WGET\)](#)
- [UNOCHA's Tampere Convention web page](#)

- [ITU Emergency Telecommunications web page](#)

## Documents

- [IDRL background sheet on international regulation of telecommunications in disaster relief](#)(April 2006)(76 Kb, 4 pages)
- [IDRL fact sheet on regulation of emergency telecommunications](#) (November 2005)(61 Kb, 2 pages)
- [IDRL and telecommunications fact sheet: The Tampere Convention \(October 2002\)](#)(152 Kb, 5 pages)

## For more information:

See the IDRL website and online legal database at [www.ifrc.org/idrl](http://www.ifrc.org/idrl) or contact us at:

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